

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SSC-01

EB-07 /063 W

----- 025666

R 061052Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY MASERU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5912

INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MASERU 0722

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, LT

SUBJECT: MINISTERIAL CHANGES IN LESOTHO GOVERNMENT

REF: MASERU 718, 719

1. SUMMARY: CHANGES IN GOL CABINET DO NOT APPEAR TM RESLECT ANY POLICY CHANGES, INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL. PRINCIPAL IMPETUS FOR CHANGES BELIEVED TO BE DESIRE TO REMOVE KOTSOKOANE FROM EDUCATION, WHERE HE HAD BECOME CONTROVERSIAL, AND TO MAKE ROOM FOR PEETE PEETE. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING IS LIST OF MINISTERS INVOLVED IN CHANGES AND THEIR NEW TITLES:

-- PEETE N. PEETE - MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS.

-- A. S. RALEBITSO - MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (NEW MINISTRY).

-- J. R. L. KOTSOKOANE - MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, COOPERATIVES AND MARKETING.

-- A. S. MOHALE - MINISTER OF EDUCATION, YOUTH, SPORTS, AND CULTURE (LATTER THREE FUNCTIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN AWAY FROM MINISTRY
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OF INFORMATION AND GIVEN TO EDUCATION, WHERE THEY WERE UNTIL LAST

NOVEMBER IN ANY CASE.)

-- E. M. LEROTHOLI - MINISTER OF INFORMATION, BORADCASTING,
AND PRISONS.

-- J. K. RAMPETA - MINISTER OF INTERIOR.

3. NONE OF MOST POWERFUL MINISTERS IN CABINET (PM, DEPUTY PM,
FINANCE, FOREIGN AFFAIRS) HAVE BEEN CHANGED.

4. IT HAS BEEN RUMORED FOR SOME TIME THAT CHIEF PEETE PEETE
WANTED TO RETURN TO CABINET AND THAT PM WAS AGREEABLE AS
SOON AS POSITION COULD BE FOUND. PEETE FORMERLY PLAYED AN
INFLUENTIAL PART IN GOVERNMENT AND PARTY AFFAIRS. HIS RETURN TO
CABINET PRESUMABLY RESTORES HIM TO AN INFLUENTIAL POSITION.

5. KOTSOKOANE HAD NOT PROVIDED EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN MINISTRY
OF EDUCATION AND, MOREOVER, HAD BECOME ASSOCIATED WITH RECOM-
MENDATIONS THAT THE GOVERNMENT TAKE OVER OWNERSHIP OF
CHURCH SCHOOLS. CHURCH (ESPECIALLY CATHOLIC) OFFICIALS MOUNTED
EFFECTIVE OPPOSITION TO THIS RECOMMENDATION, AND BOTH PM AND
KOTSOKOANE MADE SPEECHES IN PARLIAMENT TO EFFECT THAT GOVERNMENT
WAS NOT INCLINED TO ADOPT RECOMMENDATION. KOCOKOANE, AN
ANGLICAN, IS BEING REPLACED IN EDUCATION BY A. S. MOHALE, AN
ARDENT CATHOLIC. SINCE KOTSOKOANE IS A TRAINED AGRICULTURIST,
THERE IS SOME SENSE IN MOVING HIM TO AGRICULTURE, BUT RELIABLE
REPORTS HAVE IT THAT PM HAS WARNED KOTSOKOANE THAT THIS IS
HIS LAST CHANCE TO MAKE GOOD.

6. NONE OF CHANGES ARE LIKELY TO AFFECT U.S. INTERESTS. PEETE
PEETE IS KNOWN TO BE MORE PRO-ARAB THAN MOST OF HIS COLLEAGUES,
BUT HE IS NOT LIKELY TO HAVE MUCH INFLUENCE OVER FOREIGN AFFAIRS
IN HIS NEW POSITION. OUTLOOK IS FOR CONTINUATION OF GENERALLY PRO-
WESTERN FOREIGN POLICY UNDER LEADERSHIP OF PRIME MINISTER
JONATHAN, FOREIGN MINISTER MOLAPO, AND FINANCE MINISTER
SEKHONYANA.
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